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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine the experiences of women participants in the North Carolina Community College Leadership Program (NCCCLP) to determine what effect, if any, those experiences may have had on subsequent career achievement. The NCCCLP is a one-year leadership-training program designed to give women and minorities the skills needed to move into higher-level administrative positions. This study was conducted through interviews with 12 participants in the NCCCLP from 12 community colleges in North Carolina and through the review of primary source documents and relevant literature. Results indicated that: (1) participants felt that being in the NCCCLP had an indirect impact on career attainment-it built self-confidence, developed an awareness of leadership theory, taught women to work effectively with diverse groups and develop a statewide network of contacts, and gave women an understanding of the structure and operation of the North Carolina Community College System; (2) many women felt that being in the NCCCLP acted as a catalyst that led to self-improvement and greater involvement in college affairs and organizations; and (3) participants with years of experience in middle- to upper-level administrative positions said that they were familiar with the material and would have benefited from less general training. Recommendations for practice are offered. Appended are the interview questions, the introductory letter to participants, a sample consent form, and titles of program activities. (Contains 114 references.) (EMH)

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## ABSTRACT

GORHAM, LAURA S. The North Carolina Community College Leadership Program: Impact on Career Achievement as Perceived by Women Participants. (under the direction of Dr. J. Conrad Glass, Jr.)

The purpose of this research was to examine the experiences of women participants in the North Carolina Community College Leadership Program (NCCCLP) to determine what effect, if any, these experiences may have had on subsequent career achievement. The research was conducted through interviews with twelve participants from twelve different community colleges in North Carolina and through the review of primary source documents and relevant literature. Reflection by respondents demonstrated that participation contributed indirectly to career achievement. Although only one of a myriad of factors, program participation increased the women's knowledge, self-confidence, and self-awareness, enabling them to seek promotion or more satisfactory career opportunities. An analysis of perceived dissatisfactions revealed that the potential effectiveness of the program was lessened by weaknesses in program planning.

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Laura S. Gorham

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## DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my family

## BIOGRAPHY

Laura Schmidt Gorham is the daughter of Dr. Robert G. Schmidt and Margaret Hanna Schmidt. She attended Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri and graduated with a Bachelor's Degree in English Literature. She received a Master's Degree in Library Science at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and then an Associate in Applied Science Degree in Commercial Art and Audiovisual Technology from Alamance Community College in Graham, North Carolina. While employed as the Director of the Learning Resources Center at Alamance Community College, she completed the Doctoral Program in Higher Education Administration at North Carolina State University.

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# Chapter 1

## INTRODUCTION

In 1980, a report commissioned by Robert Scott, then president of the North Carolina Community College System (NCCCS), focused attention on the lack of women and minorities in the administrative ranks. Responding to this finding, the system joined with the North Carolina Chapter of the American Women in Junior and Community Colleges (now NCAAWCC), and the Southern Regional Council on Black American Affairs to co-sponsor and fund the North Carolina Community College Leadership Program (NCCCLP).

The finding that women and minorities in administrative positions were underrepresented in the community colleges in North Carolina was not a revelation. The reports, Participation by minorities and women: Patterns and trends, 1970-1979 (1979), and Participation by minorities and women: Patterns and trends, 1977-1977, 1980-1981 (1981), developed by the Division of Planning and Research of the North Carolina Department of Community Colleges, provided further evidence that the discrepancy existed. Nor was North Carolina unique in this respect.

Although research conducted during the last several decades (Gillett-Karam, Rouche, & Rouche, 1991; Vaughan, 1989) has revealed that there is no significant difference in the ability of men and women to lead, women have encountered barriers in climbing the career ladder. Women are underrepresented in higher education administration as a whole but have fared better in obtaining leadership positions in

community colleges (DiCroce, 1995), although Twombly (1995) asserts "the community college has been slow to bring women and minorities into leadership positions in proportion to their representation as faculty and students" (p. 68). Furthermore, Gillett-Karam, Baker-Smith, and Simpson (1997) found that not only is there a disparity in rank, but also in salary and perceived opportunity for advancement.

Research by Vaughan and Wiseman (1997) indicates that, 17.8% of the community college presidents, nationwide, were female compared to 16% of women holding the president's position at the four-year college and university level. North Carolina is an exception in that, in 1997, only 3.5% of community college presidents were women. In the last three years, this figure has risen to 13.6%. This is an indication that change is occurring but North Carolina still falls below the national average.

The NCCCLP was developed to help these underrepresented groups acquire the skills and knowledge base that would enable them to become good leaders and move up the career ladder if that was their goal. It began in 1988 and, to date, approximately 330 community college employees have completed the program. Women and minorities are heavily recruited but the program is open to all full-time employees of the NCCCS regardless of current position. Similar to programs such as the National Institute for Leadership Development and the Leadership Institute, the purpose of the NCCCLP is to teach participants to build peer networks, complete an extensive self-analysis, practice goal setting and team work, and receive a thorough grounding in the operation of the North Carolina Community College System from system office personnel, community college presidents and other guest speakers (NCCCS, 1999).

## Statement of the Problem

Both participants and alumni evaluate the NCCCLP on a formal basis with reports submitted annually to the sponsoring agencies. There was no information, however, regarding the long- and short-term influence the NCCCLP has had on the careers of women who have completed the program. This research examined the perceived impacts the program has had on the professional careers of the participants.

In fact, there is little information in the literature about the usefulness, in terms of career advancement, of leadership programs for women in community colleges. There is literature that indicates that participation in such programs may be a factor in career development (Julian, 1992; Cappozoli, 1989), but little that describes the impact from the participants' point of view. Greene (1998), who has recently completed research on a leadership program designed for administrative women at the university level, notes that "such programs are becoming more numerous, but documentation of their structure, content, and results is sparse" (p. 77.

## Significance

The NCCCLP and the sponsoring agencies need information about the value of the structure, content and results of the program, as perceived by women who have

completed the program. Information about the impact of such programs is important for a number of reasons, one being the demand from administrators and funding agencies for data for decision-making purposes. Underlying this is the need, by all involved, for useful information on activities and experiences that make the program meaningful both to participants and program planners, or conversely, for information about experiences and activities that were not useful according to perceptions of program participants.

The funding for the NCCCLP now comes exclusively from the North Carolina Community College System. The funding for this program has never been put in the recurring budget for the community college system and must be re-applied for each year. Information generated from this research may be used to encourage or discourage future funding and, as the results indicate a long-term positive effect, it may enable community college system office personnel to convince legislators to make funding for the NCCCLP a recurring budget item.

The perception of participants considering the NCCCLP as a means of career advancement may be useful to the directors of the program who could use the results of this study to modify the program as indicated. System office program developers could use the information to improve other leadership programs. Participants and alumni of the program might use the information provided by this research to reflect on their experience. Community college faculty and staff could use this study to determine if they might be interested in participating in the NCCCLP, while their supervisors may

review the program to see if encouraging participation will benefit the institutions as well as the interested individual.

The existing program evaluations, conducted after each individual component or activity of the program, do not provide in-depth information. The "where are you now" questionnaire sent to NCCCLP alumni provides information about some career changes from participants that choose to respond, but the information is not systematically gathered and is presented as testimonials rather than research. Information gathered from the review of these documents, however, provides triangulation by comparing and combining different data sources. Triangulation, according to Patton (1990), contributes "to the verification and validation of qualitative analysis" and enables the researcher to avoid the bias that arises from using a single source (p. 464).

This research is designed to answer the following questions:

1. What effect, as perceived by participants, has the training provided through the NCCCLP had on their professional careers?
2. What aspects of the program do the participants identify as most useful and why?
3. Did the participants' thinking about leadership change as a result of the program and, if so, in what ways?

To achieve in-depth, comprehensive answers to these questions, the study used the qualitative research approach. More specifically, I chose to use the goal-free model of program evaluation. Although this research was not designed to be a program

evaluation, it includes many of the same elements. The goal-free model, according to Patton (1990), is appropriate for qualitative research because it can utilize in-depth interviewing techniques and allow the researcher to "suspend judgment about what it is the program is trying to do and to focus instead on finding out what it is that actually happens in the program - and as a result of the program" (p. 117). Although the program has stated goals, these goals may or may not be relevant to the participants. By interviewing women about their experiences as participants in the NCCCLP and the impact, if any, the program has had on their careers, I created a "past-present-future" picture of the NCCCLP. The development of this holistic view is one of the strengths of the goal-free model.

## Limitations of the Study

1. The history and development of the North Carolina Community College Leadership Program has not been systematically documented. Supporting documents such as individual activity evaluations, program agendas, and summary evaluations were not available for all the years the program has been in existence, but the documents that did exist were examined for information that either affirmed or contradicted this research.
2. Some participants, whose insights might have been valuable, were not be available to interview due to a variety of factors, including moving out of state, retirement, or ill

health; but with 378 program graduates, there were enough available for interviews to get a broad and representative sample.

3. Since this is unique program and only a small group, chosen through purposeful sampling techniques, was interviewed, results of this research are not generalizable to those outside of the program.

## Definitions of Terms

Administrative positions - Administrative positions in the North Carolina Community College System are those that entail responsibility for decision-making and policy implementation. This includes those individuals who report directly to the dean, vice president, president or board of trustees and would include, for example presidents who report to a board of trustees, but would not include auditors, who, although they report to the president, are not responsible for decision-making.

Leadership programs - For the purpose of this research, the term will refer only to stand-alone, organized training activities that occur outside the curricular offerings of a university undergraduate or graduate program. The purpose of such programs is to develop skills and enhance the qualities of leadership and prepare a new generation of leaders.

## Summary

Although women have the ability to provide leadership in North Carolina Community Colleges, they are underrepresented and under-utilized (Gillett-Karam, Baker-Smith, & Simpson (1997). This is the situation NCCCLP was designed alter by encouraging community college personnel, particularly women and minorities, to develop leadership skills. In order to determine if this program has had an impact on the careers of the participants, women who are currently active in administrative positions and who have participated in the NCCCLP were interviewed to elicit their perceptions of the program.

# Chapter 2

# CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND RELEVANT LITERATURE

## Introduction

The North Carolina Community College Leadership Program (NCCCLP) was conceived with one of the main premises being that women could lead successfully if given appropriate skills and opportunities. This review of the literature will begin with a brief overview of leadership theory in the modern western tradition and the place of women in that tradition. The experience of women in community college leadership, particularly in North Carolina, will be examined. After this overview, leadership programs will be examined and the development of the NCCCLP will be discussed. The review will conclude with a discussion of program planning and evaluation and the evaluation model chosen to review the NCCCLP..

## Leadership Theory

Modern leadership theory, in the western tradition, can be traced back to the "great man" model of a leader. Admired leaders were studied to determine which traits were characteristic of good leaders. (Jago, 1982, Yukl, 1989, Stogdill, 1981). Lists of desirable traits were compiled and persons with leadership aspirations could compare their traits to the

list of desirable traits to determine if they possessed the appropriate characteristics. Research by Stogdill (1948) and Mann (1959) concluded that the trait approach was confusing and that identified traits were often contradictory.

In the 1940's, reflecting the current sociocultural emphasis on behaviorism, the "great man" or trait approach model was supplanted by theories asserting that effective behaviors, rather than personal characteristics, were the key to good leadership. Hemphill and Coon (1950), and Halpin and Winer (1952) and Stodgill (1963) examined the behaviors of those in leadership positions and developed the Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire (LBDQ) which measured what they considered the two dimensions of leader behavior: initiating structure and consideration, or task-oriented and relationship oriented behaviors (Hoy & Miskel, 1987).

Beginning in the 1960's, Fiedler (1967) noted that these behaviors were not static and were exhibited to a greater or lesser degree depending on circumstances. Contingency trait theory was developed to account for the relationship between traits, behavior, and the organizational environment. Fiedler's contingency theory suggests that in both favorable and unfavorable situations, task oriented leaders are more effective but that in moderately favorable situations, relationship-oriented behaviors are most effective. This theory was revised, most notably by House (1971), whose path-goal theory includes four different types of leader behavior (directive, achievement oriented, supportive and participative), and explains how leaders influence their followers, and by Hershey and Blanchard (1977) into what is popularly known as situational leadership. These researchers found that good leaders

could adapt their style to fit the particular situation and that they could change as the situation demanded.

None of these leadership theories, however, dealt adequately with the observed interaction between leaders and followers and the reciprocal effect each has on the other (Gillett-Karam, 1988). Burns (1978) and Bass (1985) recognized transactional leadership theory as being able to address this interaction between leaders and followers. Transactional leadership is characterized by a quid-pro-quo arrangement - an agreement to exchange one thing for another. This simplistic theory evolved into the concept of transformational leadership which incorporates values and beliefs into the mechanistic transactional model to result in a more complex, humanistic conception of leadership.

Burns (1978), a major proponent of transformational leadership, believed that a good leader demonstrates a responsibility toward followers which results in personal growth for both leaders and followers and creates a synergistic effect on the organization. Yukl (1994) goes farther to state, "Transforming leadership can be viewed both as a microlevel influence process between individuals and as a macrolevel process of mobilizing power to change social systems and reform institutions" (p. 351). Research on women and leadership, neglected or non-existent for many years, found the transformational model valued women's ability to build relationships and "webs of inclusion" (Helgesen, 1990). Recent research on leadership suggests models that are even more inclusive (Bensimon & Neuman, 1993). Participatory and pluralistic leadership models value the team approach and a more egalitarian organizational structure with fewer levels of hierarchical structure ( Kezar, 1998).

## Women and Leadership Theory

How do women fit into the development of leadership models? Since women have only recently been encouraged to aspire to leadership positions, the research on women in leadership is negligible until the 1970's.

In her book, Men and Women of the Corporation, Rosabeth Kanter (1977) posited that women were not inferior or deficient in leadership qualities but that the organizational structure limited their growth. She found that women's exclusion and supposed disinterest in administration could be seen as a predictable and normal response to lack of opportunity. Further research by Donelson & Gullahorn (1977) on women and minorities found that difficulties in ascending the career ladder depressed aspirations.

This alone does not explain the dearth of women in leadership positions. The theory that most human social systems are based primarily on androcentric assumptions provides the most likely explanation for the exclusion of women from leadership roles. Androcentrism is the practice of viewing the world from the male perspective. Societies - both modern and primitive- have, as noted by Margaret Mead, "assigned different roles to the two sexes and surrounds them from birth with an expectation of different behavior" (1935, pp. viii-ix). This results in a sex based division of labor and, given women's emphasis on maintaining relationships and men's focus on self and individual rights (Gilligan, 1982), male tasks are more highly valued, resulting in male dominance.

Recent research on women and leadership is grounded in the work of Carol Gilligan of Harvard. In her most influential work, In a Different Voice, Gilligan (1982) recorded female modes of thinking about morality, ethics and relationships to develop a model of adult development that differed from studies that preceded hers. She reinterpreted the work of Lawrence Kohlberg, her instructor and collaborator, who developed a moral hierarchy of decision-making based on independent, impersonal perceptions of justice as the highest level of moral thinking. Her work challenged developmental theorists to look at adult development from a different perspective, pointing out that all adult development theories had been based on research conducted on male subjects. By using women as research subjects, she was able to construct a model based on women's emphasis on relationships and their development through a series of steps to an ethic integrating care and responsibility.

Gilligan argued that the classic theorists, Freud, Erikson, and Piaget, adopted male life as the norm for the whole population, both men and women. When women did not fit into the developmental stages identified for the men, the weakness in the theory was, instead, transformed into a weakness or deficiency in women. Since women did not follow the same developmental life cycle, there must be something wrong with women. Women, as a result of being compared and comparing themselves to standards that they do not fit, have accepted and, in many cases, internalized their perceived incomplete and inadequate development as being inferior to that of males. Gilligan asserted that women have their own developmental processes but, given the different developmental paths, both men and women reach similar ends -" that judgment becomes more contextually relative in maturity and incorporates the need for human connectedness and responsibility development" (Daloz, 1986, p. 134).

According to Rosemary Gillett-Karam and Susanne and John Rouche (1991) in Underrepresentation and the Question of Diversity, "Gilligan's work represents a milestone in the current literature and research about women" (p. 58). Furthermore, Gillett-Karam and Desjardins, "...concluded that the framework posited by Gilligan is critical for examining gender and leadership" (Gillett-Karam, Rouche, & Rouche, p.71) because it leads to the conclusion that the best leaders embody a combination of male and female leadership characteristics. Her work formed the basis for much of the research done by Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger and Tarule (1986) for Women's Way of Knowing, which indicates that women acquire leadership skills more readily if they are allowed to develop their own style that allows them to exercise an ethic of responsibility and connectedness.

A 1981 study of women administrators in California community colleges found that leadership styles and attitudes that demonstrated the care and responsibility ethic as described by Gilligan were important in becoming a successful administrator. The most important attribute identified was interpersonal skills, with patience, listening skills and possessing a cooperative spirit also being high on the list (Capozzoli, 1989).

## Women and Community College Leadership

Unlike other institutions of higher learning, community colleges are a fairly recent development and are considered a movement rather than an institution. (Bogue, 1950). Predictably, community college leaders have been seen in the "great man" role. A "commander" was needed to lead the movement and men were traditionally selected to fill

that role ( Brint & Karabel, 1989). As the community college has grown and matured, so have its leadership needs. Once established, relationships within communities had to be maintained and nurtured and the autocratic, "commander" model no longer worked (Amey & Twombly, 1992, p. 479). The changing needs of the community college system created a climate that was more favorable for women aspiring to leadership positions. The traditional authoritarian leadership style has been shown to be inefficient in that it does not seek to explore and encourage the unique talents of the individuals within the organization (Peters & Waterman, 1982). As the community college population becomes more diverse, leadership models that do not acknowledge or that contradict the values of the individuals who make up the organization stifle and alienate those individuals resulting in negative effects (Kezar, 1998). In addition to this realization, there is also the need for more skilled administrators. The AACJC Commission on the Future of the Community Colleges (1988, p. 42) recognized " a clear and pressing need to increase diversity among community college leadership" requiring "intensive recruitment of women and minorities." Women have the talent the community colleges need (Eaton, 1981).

In community college administration, as in the rest of higher education, women hold more leadership positions than ever before. However, disparities still exist. Nationally, women presidents represent only 11% of the total number of college presidents. In addition, women in administrative positions command less than 92% of the salary that a man would receive for the same job (Jones, 1991). Discrimination still exists, despite legislation designed to discourage it. Women in community college administration reported that they experience multiple forms of sex discrimination including failure to share information,

informal 'old boys' meetings where decisions are made without including women, promotion, and pay differences (Gillett-Karam, Baker-Smith, & Simpson, 1997, and Hemming, 1982).

In the North Carolina Community College System, women represent 59.4% of the student population enrolled in credit programs, 50.3 % of the full-time faculty, 65.2% of the full-time extension faculty, 44.8% of middle level managers, 31.3% of the senior administrators, and 13.6% of the presidents. Salary differentials show that while women in administrative positions are comparably or better credentialed for the positions they hold, they make approximately 8% less than men (Gillett-Karam, Baker-Smith, & Simpson, 1997). In their investigation of job satisfaction features, both women and men, indicated that salaries and opportunities for advancement were the least satisfactory aspects of their position. However, men were more concerned with salary issues while women found the nature of the institution as a career obstacle. Legitimate obstacles to career advancement exist. Lack of appropriate credentials such as a terminal degree, unwillingness or inability to relocate, and family responsibilities often have a more serious and negative impact on the careers of women (Durnovo, 1988, Sagaria, 1988, and Julian, 1992).

## Leadership Programs

Strategies exist to overcome obstacles to career advancement. Mentoring has traditionally been considered one of the critical factors leading to advancement (Twombly, 1987, Winship, 1991, Hill & Ragland, 1995, Gillett-Karam, Rouche and Rouche, 1994,

Capozzoli, 1989 and more). However, with so few women in leadership positions, it can be difficult to find a female mentor. Vaughan (1989) concluded, " Male dominance in the world of community college administration tends to force women to turn to male mentors; however, given a choice... the majority of women chose someone of their own sex" (p.22). In addition, research has found that women in leadership positions are often hard-pressed to find the physical and emotional resources to act as mentors. Women mentors indicated that they found it difficult to continually interpret the male dominated institution for their women students and felt that they might not be in a strong enough position to "facilitate mentees" entry into the dominant academic networks and workplace" (Stalker, 1996).

Since satisfactory mentoring opportunities are often unavailable, women have looked to professional organizations and leadership training programs for guidance and assistance. During the last several decades, in an effort to ameliorate the underrepresentation of women in leadership positions and compensate for lack of mentors and other barriers to inclusion, leadership programs have been developed. There are contradictory findings in the literature as to the importance leadership programs have on upward career mobility. Shavlik and Touchton (1983) and Speizer (1984) reported that there was the perception of a relationship between leadership program participation and career movement that suggests that the programs are affecting their desired outcomes. For example, participants in Florida's Educational Leadership Enhancement Grant (Anderson, 1997) reported that the program had contributed to their advancement and promotions. However, Julian (1992) found that leadership training, as a career strategy, did not seem to be important.

## Leadership Programs for Community College Leaders

One nationally acclaimed leadership program is the Executive Leadership Institute (ELI) sponsored by the League for Innovation in the Community College in cooperation with the University of Texas at Austin. Begun in 1989, the purpose of the ELI is "to provide an opportunity for potential community college presidents as community leaders to review their abilities and interests, to refine their skills, and to participate in discussions on leadership issues with outstanding community college and other community leaders in North America" (League for Innovation in the Community College, 1999).

A more recent initiative of the League is the development of the Expanding Leadership Diversity project which is designed to assist middle-management administrators and faculty advance to senior-level positions. Emphasis is on recruitment of women and minorities. Program experiences include mentoring and community problem-solving (League for Innovation in the Community College, 1999).

The ACCLAIM (Academy for Community College Leadership Advancement, Innovation, and Modeling) program, which has now ended, was designed to train leaders to use the community based programming model developed by Edgar Boone (1992). Several of the components of the program functioned as leadership development programs. The four components were: 1) continuing education programs to familiarize community college leaders with the community- based programming concept, 2) a fellows program which, each year, engaged fifteen NCSU doctoral students in research and internships related to the model, 3) information development and dissemination to share experiences using the model

with community college leaders and, 4) the professoriate, a component designed to strengthen cooperation among universities and community colleges (Vaughan & Gillett-Karam, 1993).

The Kentucky Academy, recently discontinued, was developed by the Kentucky Community College System and included a four-day summer seminar, two fall retreats, an internship at the home campus with the college president as mentor, and a written paper at the end of the program. The goals of this program were to develop ideal leaders for community colleges, increase women and minority in leadership roles at all levels, and to develop a model program (Anderson, 1997).

The Institute for Tomorrow's Generation of Leaders is a leadership institute dedicated to fostering skills in Native Americans and preparing them for positions in higher education administration, especially within the tribal colleges. This program involves about forty participants in a two-week seminar, three workshops and a three-day workshop in Washington, D. C. where they meet and work with national leaders. Each participant has a college president as a mentor and is expected to attend board and consortium meetings (Anderson, 1997).

LINC (Leadership Institute for a New Century) is similar in purpose and structure to the Kentucky Academy. It is expected to increase the number of women and minority leaders in the Iowa Community College System. Each year, twenty participants, mentored by trustees and presidents, participate in a two-day meeting each month with higher education leaders on a different campus, engage in monthly conference calls with other participants and attend one or more national conferences per year (Anderson, 1997).

The ACE Fellows program is for administrators in colleges and universities. The American Council on Education and the Ford Foundation sponsor this training. A component for community college administrators has recently been added. Designed for mid-career faculty and administrators, activities include a year-long internship, week-long seminars, regional meetings, visits to other institutions and a final paper (Anderson, 1997).

The Leadership Academy at Salt Lake Community College, a four-day seminar, selects 25 participants to learn about budgeting, team building, strategic planning and more. Half of the participants are selected from all community college organizational levels while the other half are chosen by senior management. The Covey Leadership Academy provides a trainer for part of the seminar (Anderson, 1997).

## Leadership Programs for Community College Women

Some of the best known and most influential leadership development programs have been conducted by the National Institute for Leadership Development (NILD), which sponsors six different programs. Founded in 1980, NILD provides training for men and women, although it is best known for preparing women for leadership roles. Carolyn Desjardins, Mildred Bulpitt and the Maricopa Community College District developed the model. The six programs were designed for mid- and high-level personnel from faculty to presidents in community colleges. Each program includes six days of intensive interaction and then a yearlong project with a mentor and a final evaluation. Each session admits between 35 and 50 participants. While designed primarily to serve women, one of NILD's

programs emphasizes the development of mixed-gender teams (AAWCJC, 1991). This year, the two programs offered are the Leaders Program for administrative and faculty women and Leadership for Change: The Next Step, which is designed for women whose next career goal is a community college presidency (NILD, 1999).

## Leadership Programs For North Carolina Community College Administrators

To get a current, local perspective on the various leadership development programs available through the North Carolina Community College System (NCCCS), discussions were held with Bob Allen, Director of Professional Development. The NCCCS sponsors two programs in addition to the NCCCLP. One is the Institute for Future Presidents (IFP), co-sponsored by the NC Association of Community College Presidents and the NC Association of Community College Trustees. This program began in 1997 with a class of 22 members. The purpose of the program is to provide highly qualified and competent candidates for local community college boards of trustees to consider when selecting a president.

The IFP provides executive-level experiences including a mentorship with a NCCCS president, local college board interaction, meetings with search firms and national consultants and a professional assessment of the skills, behavior, and knowledge required to become a president.

Another of the NCCCS programs, begun in November 1998, is the Institute for Senior Administrators (ISA) which is sponsored by the Professional Development and

Academic and Student Services Division of the NCCCS. Similar to the IFP, the goal of this program is to develop and train a highly competent/committed/experienced group of internal applicants for Presidents/Colleges to consider for senior-level administrative positions.

These programs, in part, replace the Executive Management Leadership Institute (EMLI). The EMLI was a longer program, with an academic component coordinated through North Carolina State University. This program included participants from all organizational levels of the community college and was, according to Bob Allen, too large and too diverse a group to be able to plan an educational experience that would meet the individual career needs of all the participants and the needs of the system for trained administrators (Allen, 1999).

## North Carolina Community College Leadership Program

The NCCCLP combines elements of many of these programs into a unique format. Like the former EMLI, but unlike other leadership programs, it is open to all levels of community college personnel. With the exception of the Leadership Academy at Salt Lake, leadership development programs are designed for middle to senior level administrators, particularly for those with presidential ambitions. The focus on leadership at all levels is one of the distinctive characteristics of the NCCCLP. Another distinctive feature is the leadership-from-within, with graduates of the program working as directors of subsequent programs. The directors maintain an extensive alumni network and continuing education

program, which provide opportunities for each successive graduating class to meet and interact with members of earlier classes.

The Institute for Tomorrow's Generation of Leaders, LINC, ELD, and several others, like the NCCCLP, have as a primary purpose, training women and/or ethnic minorities for leadership roles in order to provide more diversity at all organization levels. Other training programs focus on skill building for those already in middle and senior level positions and are not, purposefully, promoting diversity.

Like the other programs, the NCCCLP provides a variety of activities. These basic activities include mentoring, networking, and shadowing programs or internships with senior-level administrators. Problem-solving skills are taught, participants are involved in lectures and discussions with community college leaders, participation in professional organizations is encouraged and personal skills/abilities are assessed (see Appendix D for a list of individual activities). Most of the programs discussed above, including the NCCCLP, run for about one year. Twenty to thirty participants seem to be the preferred enrollment. These programs require individual application and referral from senior administrators and are sponsored, in the majority of cases, not by individual community colleges, but by a combination of local, state, and national organizations (Akers, 1999).

The NCCCLP was developed by Dr. Pat Akers and Dr. Shirley Luckadoo and was sponsored by the North Carolina Chapter of what was, at the time, the American Association of Women in Community and Junior Colleges (NC-AAWCJC). The program was co-sponsored by the North Carolina Department of Community Colleges

under the leadership of then governor, Robert Scott. The North Carolina Chapter of the Southern Regional Council on Black American Affairs endorsed the program. The NCCCLP was designed to meet needs, identified by the Commission on the Future of Community Colleges, to identify, train and renew its leadership and to expand opportunities for a wide range of personnel. The program placed special emphasis on recruiting women and minorities since they had been traditionally under-represented in community college higher administration. The stated goals of the program are as follows:

1. Strengthen the leadership skills of community college employees at all levels.
2. Assist colleges in identifying, motivating, and training women and minority employees who can assume leadership in their own institutions.
3. Inform potential leaders about the history, structure and governance of the community college system.
4. Promote opportunities for networking among employees in the community college system.
5. Provide a pool of qualified leaders in community college education.

An average of 34 applications are accepted for the program each year. Recommendations from the college administration as well as an application form, resume, and letter from the applicant are required. The process is competitive; there are always more applicants than there are openings. The cost to the participant is $200 with the rest of the expenses of conducting the program being paid by the sponsoring agencies.

The total cost of the program varies, but averages about $17,000 per year with between $7,500 and $10,000 coming from the North Carolina Community College System and the remainder from tuition and other sources.

The program structure varies from year to year, but is basically a seven-month program, beginning in November with graduation in May or June of the following year. The orientation is a one-day program, usually held at a community college. This is followed by a two-day retreat at Camp Caraway in Asheboro. During the seven-month program there are four or five one-and two-day seminars held at various locations around the state, depending on program content and available host colleges. Each year, the major topics addressed are personality and leadership styles, history and structure of the North Carolina Community College System, race and gender issues, and group dynamics and problem solving.

Another way of differentiating the programs is to look at whether they seem to be designed to reproduce the status quo or whether they seek to alter it in some way. The Executive Leadership Program, the Institute for Future Leaders, and the Institute for Senior Administrators, for example, could be viewed as programs designed to train those already in upper-level positions to continue and refine existing practice. The NCCCLP, and other programs that recruit women and minorities, could be viewed as programs that will introduce change and diversity into the existing community college system. Conversely, they may be designed, instead, to train the newer, diverse population of up-coming leaders to adapt to the existing structure. More in-depth research will be needed to determine the implicit and

explicit purposes of the programs. How women perceive this program, as revealed in this research provides some insight into these purposes.

## Program Planning

The NCCCLP is a planned program with a structure that reveals familiarity on the part of the planners with program theory and planning. According to Bickman (1987), program theory is a plausible and sensible model of how a program is supposed to work and includes: 1) adult education principles that make a program meaningful and relevant to adults, 2) factors that enhance or inhibit learning and use of learning, and 3) elements needed in a program to achieve the expected results. Boone (1985) describes programming as "the individual and collaborative efforts of the adult education organization, the adult educators, and the learners in planning, designing, implementing, evaluating, and accounting for educational programs" (p.2), and offers the following definition: "... a comprehensive, systematic, and proactive process encompassing the total planned, collaborative efforts of the adult education organization, the adult educator in the roles of change agent and programmer, representatives of the learners and the learners themselves in a purposive manner and designed to facilitate desirable changes in the behavior of learners and the environment or system in which they live" (p. 41). Program theory reveals an understanding of how the various elements that make up a program fit together and how the structure of a program can influence the results

experienced by the participants. Program theory has evolved in much the same way as leadership theory, reflecting the prevailing philosophies of the time.

Tyler (1949) began codifying program theory in Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction. This was followed by Knowles' Informal Adult Education (1950) and has continued with the various editions of the Handbook of Adult Education and Handbook of Adult and Continuing Education, Houle's The Design of Education (1972) and Knowles, The Modern Practice of Adult Education (1980). Programming is considered the central activity of adult education. As a result, in professional schools where adult educators are trained, there has been much emphasis placed on teaching them how to run effective programs in accordance with adult education principles. To this end, many models of programs have been developed. Edgar Boone (1985), in Developing Programs in Adult Education, lists models that he considers significant. These include models developed by Lippitt, Watson and Westley in 1958; Beal, Blount, Powers and Johnson in 1966; Freire in 1970; Knowles in 1970; Tyler in 1971; Boone, Dolan, and Shearon in 1971; Houle in 1972; Kidd in 1973; and Boyle in 1981.

Rosemary Caffarella (1994) lists models she finds particularly noteworthy. These include several selected by Boone: Tyler, Houle and Knowles as well as Laird (1985), Caffarella, (1985), Sork and Caffarella (1989), Sork (1990), Tracey (1992), Bothwell and Kazanas (1993), Cervero (1988) and Harris, (1989). To these we can add Boone's (1985) Conceptual Programming Model and Caffarella's (1994) Interactive Program Planning Model. This is not an inclusive list, but serves to illuminate the importance of

programming in adult education and the creativity and effort expended to develop best practice.

These models have evolved through theory and practice with elements of one model being combined with elements of others, new elements being added, resulting in a new model reflecting current thought and practice. Most program theorists and practitioners recognize that there is no single model that is best applied in all situations. Knowles (1980) stressed that adult education programs must be developed with the full knowledge and consent of the learners. Programming has changed from a mechanistic exercise developed by an expert to an interactive process that accounts for the mission and philosophy of the organization, the sociocultural context in which the program is conceived and delivered, and the fundamental beliefs of the adult educator and the adult learners regarding learning and the rights of individuals and groups.

Researchers and practitioners have discovered that program theory and practice often bear little resemblance to each other. Argyris and Schon (1974) refer to this discrepancy as differences between espoused theory and theories-in-use. To effectively describe an actual program, both theories must be accounted for. Programming theory is improved, as is practice when one informs the other.

Models are refined by practice and increasing sensitivity to the context in which they take place and to the diversity of participants. Moreover, current programming theory recognizes that the political nature of programming requires a balance between the needs and goals of the organization and society and the needs and goals of the learners. It

is the responsibility of adult educators to negotiate the differences in an ethical and respectful manner.

Dr. Shirley Luckadoo and Dr. Pat Akers, the first directors of the NCCCLP, are graduates of the Adult and Community College program at North Carolina State University. They may have been influenced by exposure to Boone's model. In addition, both women, by virtue of their association with NCSU and by their position as community college administrators were aware of the development of the ACCLAIM project and other leadership programs co-sponsored by the NCCCS and NCSU. Boone's (1985) concept of programming certainly could be applied to the NCCCLP… "Programming includes the individual and collaborative efforts of the adult education organization, the adult educators, and the learners in planning, designing, implementing, evaluating, and accounting for educational programs…" (p. 2).

The programming model used by the National Institute for Leadership Development was also used to develop the NCCCLP. One of the program founders, Dr. Luckadoo, attended NILD prior to the founding of the NCCCLP. Dr. Pat Akers participated in the National Leadership Institute sponsored by the American Association of Women in Community Colleges (AAWCC). Both Dr. Akers and Dr. Luckadoo have been active in AAWCC, which has provided support for NILD. It was through work with women leaders at NILD, that it became evident that the authoritarianism inherent in traditional leadership styles was uncomfortable for many women and that, as a result, they would avoid leadership positions. Early research by Gilligan (1982), Lyons (1983),

McClelland (1975) and others supported this finding and subsequent research on leadership styles funded by the AAWCC confirmed it (Desjardins, 1989). The program design and activities of the NCCCLP give evidence that the model was greatly influenced by this research.

It is also clear that the program was developed with principles of effective practice in mind. (Brookfield, 1986). It is understood that the program participants have chosen to attend, and that both facilitators and learners respect and acknowledge the others' self-worth. The NCCCLP requires collaborative efforts among directors/facilitators, participants, and administrators to engage in praxis and critical reflection. The goal of the program is to produce knowledgeable, skilled, empowered adults that will have a positive impact on the future of the NC community college system.

## Program Evaluation

Although this research is not a program review or an evaluation of the NCCCLP, the research method used evaluative techniques and the data that was gathered from interviewing program participants yielded evaluative data. Therefore, a discussion of evaluation methods in general and the specific methods considered for conducting this research study is included.

Educational evaluation, like leadership theory and programming theory, has evolved through the years, with theory following and reacting to practice. The evolution can be seen in the multiplicity of definitions of evaluation. Tyler (1950), reflecting the prevailing emphasis on objectives, defined evaluation as "...the process of determining to what extent the educational objectives are actually being met" (p. 69). Later, the focus changed to goals

and in 1967, Michael Scriven defined evaluation as "...a methodological activity which...consists simply in the gathering and combining of performance data with a weighted set of goal scales to yield either comparative or numerical ratings, and in the justification of a) the data-gathering instruments, b) the weighings, and c) the selection of goals" (p. 39).

Several years later, Stufflebeam, et al (1971) stated, "Evaluation is the process of delineating, obtaining, and applying descriptive and judgmental information about the worth or merit of some object's goals, plans, operations, and results in order to guide decision-making, maintain accountability, and/or foster understandings" (p. 40). The focus had shifted to decision-making.

In 1980, hoping to both develop theory and improve practice, Cronbach said that evaluation is essentially "an examination conducted to assist in improving this program and other programs having the same purpose" (p.14). The Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation (1981), simply defined evaluation as the "systematic investigation of the worth or merit of some object" (p. 3). Rossi and Freeman (1993), emphasizing usefulness, defined evaluation as the "systematic application of social research procedure for assessing the conceptualization, design, implementation and utility of social intervention programs" (p. 5).

One of the recent definitions by Stufflebeam and Webster (1994) makes an effort to consider the multiple approaches to evaluation and continues the prevailing emphasis on the utilitarian aspects of evaluation. They suggest, "An educational evaluation study is one that is designed and conducted to assist some audience to judge and improve the work of some educational object" (p. 332).

## Types of Models

As the meaning and interpretation of evaluation have changed, models have been developed to reflect the definitions. Steele (1989) identified more than fifty models. Adult educators have classified these models by type. House (1978) lists seven types; systems analysis, behavioral objectives, decision-making, goal-free, art criticism, adversary and transaction models. Guba and Lincoln (1987) identify more than forty different models and classify them as countenance models that are organized by objectives, models that are organized by decisions, like the Phi Delta Kappa CIPP (Context, Input, Process, Product) type models, or goal-free models that are organized by effects. Gardener (1994) classifies the models into the following schemes: evaluation as measurement, as professional judgment, assessment of congruence between performance and objectives, decision oriented and goal free.

Stufflebeam and Webster (1994) now call for closer analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of existing approaches and the development of new models. More recently, asserting that current evaluation theory needs to focus on values rather than technique, Michael Collins (1991) suggests a critical evaluation model based on Habermas's concept of communicative action that would engage all concerned in a collective effort to gain a holistic understanding of the program.

## Background of Model Development

This proliferation of definitions and models reflects the changing research paradigms of the last fifty years. Adult education, like many social sciences, began by adopting evaluation methods from the natural sciences. It was considered important to establish the integrity of the research by demonstrating a rigorous, scientific explanation of cause and effect relationships. This need, combined with management theory that stressed accountability and scientific management techniques, resulted in adult education choosing evaluations that measured effect through experimental design.

However, by the late 1950's, these evaluation models proved increasingly frustrating to practitioners who needed information on program process rather than objectives and outcomes to help establish best practice. Cronbach (1963) criticized the lack of relevance and utility and suggested that evaluation theory should focus on the development of practice that would provide useful data for curriculum.

Researchers and practitioners became increasingly aware that current practice was not evaluating all the program outcomes. Usually, only positive outcomes were noted - negative outcomes were often ignored. To improve practice, both positive and negative outcomes needed to be assessed. Moreover, it became increasingly evident that there were many unanticipated effects of programs not recognized by a priori objectives-based evaluations.

These unanticipated effects often had important impacts on the designed programs but were unaccounted for in traditional evaluations (Madaus, Stufflebeam & Scriven, 1994). Cronbach (1982) insisted that evaluation was an art rather than a science and the objectives-based models were inappropriate since they were inflexible and ignored much useful data.

Also driving evaluation research was the demand from administrators and funding agencies for data for decision-making purposes. Underlying this was the need, by all involved, for useful information. This is clearly evidenced in the Four Attributes of Sound Evaluation issued by the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation (1981). The first two of the four attributes deal primarily with utility. One was the utility of the evaluation to the audience to be served in relation to the problems they face and the second attribute was the feasibility of the evaluation in terms of its efficient use of practical procedures and its political viability.

Most recently, with the development of critical research paradigms, there is the recognition that no evaluation methodology is value free and without political consequences. In a multicultural world with pluralistic values, it is often necessary to design evaluations to address different issues and concerns. Evaluations must be designed in cooperation and collaboration with program participants and stakeholders and must be dynamic and fluid to meet the changing needs and demands for useful information. Cronbach (1982) addressed this, saying "there is no best plan for an evaluation…design choices depend on judgments about the facts likely to emerge and the weight they may carry in an ever-changing political world" (pp. 321-322). Stufflebeam & Webster (1994), and others echo this insistence that no one type is best in the recent literature.

The three models that seem the strongest, for my research purposes, are the utilization-focused evaluation model (Patton, 1986), the responsive model (Stake, 1975), and the goal free model (Scriven, 1972).

Utilization-focused Model

The choice of Patton's utilization-focused model as one of the strongest was made for the same reasons that drove Patton to develop the model in the first place. The information gathered through evaluation needs to be applied to improve practice. Utilization-focused evaluation is a process for making decisions about the content of the evaluation, but this content is not specified in advance, it is developed cooperatively with the users to identify relevant evaluation questions. This is a pragmatic, hands-on way to look at evaluation. It does not address theory building or contributions to the literature, nor according to Cronbach, should it, since evaluations are context sensitive. He states: "results of a program evaluation are so dependent on the setting that replication is only a figure of speech; the evaluator is essentially a historian" (Cronbach, et al, 1980, p. 7). The utilization-focused evaluation model clearly addresses the concern of the Joint Committee on Standards that utility is the primary attribute of good evaluation.

Responsive Model

The responsive model (Stake, 1975), like the utilization-focused model, analyses the program itself rather than merely indicating whether or not objectives are being met and

provides information for program improvement. Kaufman and Thomas (1980) found that responsive model is particularly useful in evaluating programs in the arts and humanities that would include much of adult education. Responsive evaluation can be both formative and summative since it documents what is going on during the program as well as describing final results.

Goal-Free Model

Scriven's goal-free evaluation model is based on the premise that pre-specified goals or determinations of what areas of the program to focus on set up conditions that make a holistic review of a program impossible. He adds "consideration and evaluation of goals was an unnecessary but also a possibly contaminating effect" (Scriven, 1972, p.1). By looking at a program without preconceived opinions regarding the value, worth, and quality, the evaluator can more readily see the program as it is rather than how it is envisioned to be. By looking at effects instead of goals, both planned and unplanned effects can be discovered. These effects may be as important or more important than the intended results of the program. Scriven points out that even terms like "side effects" and "unplanned" have negative connotations. Goal-free evaluation is the only means of systematically identifying serendipitous results. Collins (1991) observes that "goal-free [evaluation] has demonstrated the insufficiency and artificiality of an evaluation enterprise restricted to a consideration of predetermined measurable objectives" (p.39).

Goal-free evaluation has some major weakness. Guba and Lincoln (1987) point out that, unlike the other models, the process for conducting a goal-free evaluation is less clearly delineated. The process is not described in operational detail although others, like Kaufman and Thomas (1980), have provided some guidance. There is also no explanation of how one recognizes the effects and which effects are important or how needs, to which effects are finally compared, are determined. These weaknesses can be freeing - Shadish and Epstein (1987) remind us that theories and models of program evaluation need to be designed to evaluate diverse activities and suit specific users in a variety of situations. Therefore, they should be general in nature and intentionally non-prescriptive.

Like Stake's responsive model, goal-free evaluation is an inductive, holistic approach that can be used as both a formative and summative evaluation. It allows the evaluator to collect a variety of data; interviews, questionnaires or whatever the evaluator, in collaboration with the participants and stakeholders, feels is needed to determine possible results.

As stated in Chapter 1, I have chose to use the goal-free model. My choice was determined by a number of factors. Grotelueschen (1976) says there are three reasons to conduct an evaluation: when there is a need for justification or accountability of past activities, when focusing on current efforts at program improvement and to assist in planning future programs. Although this research was not an evaluation, it resulted in generating information that can be used for justifying or improving the NCCCLP. One of the strengths of the goal-free method is that does not involve a lot of time and commitment from those involved in developing and implementing the program and the researcher can use data

collected through other methodologies to flesh out the information obtained through goal-free techniques. Some data from the NCCCLP have already been collected through surveys that indicated which activities were most helpful, least useful, etc. The Likert scale was used to determine individual satisfaction with the overall program and informal surveys are sent out periodically to ascertain the career status of program graduates. What had not been heard were the individual stories, the reflection on their learning and the interpretation of their experience by the participants. Patton (1990) finds that goal-free evaluation lends itself to the qualitative paradigm that was chosen for this research because it relies on description and direct experience with the program.

Also, like the responsive model, goal-free evaluation is value-pluralistic. Guba & Lincoln (1987) maintain that one of the strengths of goal-free evaluation is that it allows for the possibility of conflicts among the different value positions held by participants, stakeholders, and others involved. This research revealed some tension between what is taught in the NCCCLP and what is practiced in the North Carolina Community College System. This information that has been generated by this research will allow us all, researcher, planners, and participants, to engage in what Schon (1987) believes to be the most crucial component of adult learning, reflection on experience.

In order to develop a more holistic view of the overall program, I felt it was important not to pre-determine or anticipate what the outcomes will be. This model allowed the participants in the program to determine what was important to them.

## Conceptual Framework

The career development of women interested in administrative careers in North Carolina Community Colleges is influenced by a variety of factors (Figure 1). A study by Augusta Julian (1992) listed strategies to increase the likelihood of moving up the career ladder and identified external and internal factors that influence these strategies. Strategies include networking, mentoring, education, willingness to re-locate or geographical mobility and leadership training. Internal factors, or personal attributes, include demographic variables such as age and marital status and psychological variables such as career aspirations and psychological types. External variables are independent of the individual. External variables include the institutional climate, the employment opportunities that are available, and match between the available job and the applicant's experience. Julian concluded that demographic variables were not related to achievement but that career strategies were most likely related. This research explored the importance of the leadership training strategy identified by Julian to the participants in the NCCCLP.

Leadership training is the avenue to career achievement that this research focused on and, in particular, leadership training through the NCCCLP. This research allowed me to look at how the participants perceived the NCCCLP, to determine what activities and exercises contributed to the growth or improvement of their professional careers and to examine the impact that the program, as a whole, had on developing their concept of leadership. A conceptual model for this study is shown in Figure 1 on the following page.

## Summary

The evolution of leadership theory over the last century has resulted in leadership models that allow for the inclusion of women. Across the country, leadership programs have been developed to provide women with the necessary skills to exercise power effectively and responsibly in the field of education. One such program is the North Carolina Community College Leadership Program. To determine the usefulness of this program to the women it seeks to empower and the state it is designed to serve, a sample of women who have participated in the program were interviewed using the goal-free method. Their perceptions of the program provide in-depth information about the program and its impact.

# Chapter 3

# RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

## Purpose

The purpose of my research is to understand better the effect participation in the North Carolina Community College Leadership Program (NCCCLP) has had on the professional careers of women; what parts of the program were most useful and why; and if participation has influenced women's thinking about leadership. Answering these questions may enable those with an interest in encouraging women and minorities to move into leadership roles to design programs that better meet the needs of these women. It is also hoped that this understanding will engender discussion of organizational change needed to create a more favorable environment for women. Finally, women making career choices involving increased leadership responsibilities may learn from the experiences of the women interviewed for this study.

## Research design

A qualitative design was chosen to provide a holistic picture of a multi-faceted program. Qualitative research is "a plan for engaging in systematic inquiry to bring about a deeper understanding of the phenomenon" or, in this case, the participants' experiences

of the phenomenon (Marshall and Rossman, 1995, 16). This exploratory approach allowed me to look beyond the existing data that rates the program activities on a numerical scale, and to identify relationships between the program and the professional careers of the participants. The particular approach used was the goal-free evaluation method (Scriven 1972).

The general interview guide approach (Patton, 1990) was employed to allow the participants to speak about their experience from their own frame of reference and in their own words. The interview guide provided enough structure to insure that the researcher covered the same issues with each member of the sample group without forcing responses into predetermined categories. By entering the research process without preconceived hypotheses, theories developed were grounded in the social interaction between the researcher and the subject and adhered to the tenets of goal-free evaluation.

## Population and Sample

There have been 378 graduates of the NCCCLP. As of 2000, eighty-six percent of the participants have been women (Stone, 1998). They include individuals representing all organizational levels of the community college system. All participants in the program were selected by their college administration as having the potential to benefit from leadership training. The program leaders stated that data describing this population have not been collected in a consistent manner, and document analysis did not

result in a more accurate demographic profile of the graduates as was hoped. This research was concerned with the impact that the program has had on career advancement and leadership opportunities available to women, so only female participants were interviewed.

Selecting the number of women participants to be interviewed forced a choice between breadth and depth. Purposeful stratified sampling was employed to yield maximum variation (Patton, 1990). In order to obtain maximum variation, members of my dissertation committee suggested that community colleges be identified by geographic location: mountains, piedmont, or coastal plain. Within these geographic groupings, colleges were identified as rural, urban or suburban. Each of the colleges in these groups was assigned a number and, using a random number table, a rural, urban and suburban college in each of the geographic areas was selected and listed in order of selection. Since the colleges in the piedmont area are more numerous than in the other two regions, two rural, urban and suburban colleges were selected from this region. NCCCLP participants employed by those colleges were identified and their years of participation noted. Individuals from these colleges were chosen for interviews based on the year they participated in the program to ensure that at least one graduate from each of the ten years the program has been in existence was included. If there was more than one participant per college eligible for interviewing, the choice was determined by random selection.

The rationale for this process was that women who have graduated recently might not yet have seen the same effect, if any, of women who completed the program ten years

before. By looking at a span of years, it was possible to learn how the program changed and matured. Women from as many different community colleges as possible were interviewed to get the broadest possible range of responses. It was thought that it might be useful to look for differences between the perceptions of women from rural colleges as compared to urban colleges or from diverse geographical regions of the state. Rural colleges tend to have fewer resources than community colleges in urban areas and participants from well-funded colleges might have a different perspective and different experiences than those from colleges with fewer resources. Rather than identify these colleges by name, which might compromise the anonymity of those interviewed, the division by urban and rural was used instead.

Since my interest is in leadership skills of women in college administration, only women either in administrative positions or poised to move to a higher professional level were interviewed. The sample size was set at twelve program graduates only after enough women were interviewed to determine that needed depth and saturation was reached. According to Patton (1990), this results in "two kinds of findings: (1) high-quality, detailed descriptions of each case, which are useful for documenting uniqueness, and (2) important shared patterns that cut across cases and derive their significance from having emerged out of heterogeneity" (p. 172).

## Data Analysis

Reliability, validity, and generalizability are terms originally associated with quantitative methodologies. Qualitative researchers may define these terms differently but both adhere to the premise that for research to be useful, it must be credible. According to Patton (1990), credibility depends on rigorous technique and methods, credibility of the researcher, and a philosophical grounding in the qualitative research paradigm. Reliability, or the extent to which a study can be replicated, is not applicable in qualitative studies. Instead, according to Bogdan and Biklen (1998), "qualitative researchers tend to view reliability as a fit between what they record as data and what actually occurs in the settings under study, rather than the literal consistency across different observations" (p.36). LeCompte and Preissle (1993) suggest that, in order to ensure external reliability, careful explication be given to "researcher status position, information choices, social situations and conditions, analytic constructs and premises, and methods of data collection and analysis" (p.334). Internal reliability was addressed by the tape recording and transcription of each interview that are available to members of my dissertation committee. Following some of the strategies outlined by Merriam (1991) will provide external validity. I used these strategies during my research:

1. Triangulation - Newsletters, surveys, applications, and other documents were reviewed.
2. Member-checks - Data and interpretations of data was shared with the research subjects and their feedback was requested. Guba and Lincoln (1981) recommend that

this be done on an ongoing basis throughout the course of the study. Transcripts were shared with originating participants and corrections and comments were encouraged.

3. Long-term or repeated observations of the same phenomena - Multiple interviews with members of different classes satisfied these criteria.
4. Peer review - My dissertation committee constituted a peer review process.
5. Acknowledging researcher bias - This was dealt with by keeping a journal and extensive field notes.

The process of analyzing data began after the first interview and each subsequent interview further defined and refined categories. I also maintained a log or journal of my experiences and thought processes, as recommended by Bogdan and Biklen (1982), Glesne & Peshkin (1992), Ely (1991), and LeCompte and Preissle (1993), to help me reflect on what I learned from the research process, and to be sensitive to any personal biases. Using the constant comparative method, all transcripts were reviewed several times to identify general categories of responses. As patterns began to emerge, categories became more defined and when the final interviews were completed, coding of the transcripts, according to category, began. The initial work was done by hand, but as definite patterns are revealed, data was entered in a word processing program. Discussions were held with two members of my dissertation committee regarding the identification of resulting patterns and major themes before the results were written.

Agreeing with Erikson (1986) that the production of generalizable knowledge is an inappropriate goal for interpretive research, I, nevertheless, attempted to provide "thick description" (Geertz, 1973) that allow those who wish to apply my findings to their own situation a "full and thorough knowledge of the particular" (Stake, 1978). As Eisner (1981) asserts, the general definitely resides in the particular and that we learn by applying what is learned in one situation to subsequently encountered similar situations. This may establish "representativeness" in which, instead of generalizability, the findings provide a "universal statement of general social process" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998, p. 32). Any readers of this research are encouraged to use the findings to enhance their own understanding of their particular situation bearing in mind that this research is "only generalizable to theoretical propositions and not to populations or universes" (Yin, 1984, p.21).

Triangulation consisted of document analysis. Evaluations, newsletters, newspaper articles, reports and other documents published by the program were compared with the information gathered in the interview process ensure credibility.

## Role of the Researcher

While not a participant observer, I am a graduate of the NCCCLP and went through the same leadership classes and exercises as those I am interviewing. I believe that this shared experience created a bond with those I am interviewing that encouraged them to talk to me freely. Our shared frame of reference made it easier for me to

structure and phrase questions that elicited a broad range of responses as well. An early concern was that my natural sympathies with fellow graduates might bias my perspective and that they might be inclined to couch responses in the context of our shared language and experience rather than reveal their true interpretation of the experience. Miles and Huberman (1984) voiced a similar concern for researcher effect bias in that "...people now have to figure out who this person is, why he or she is there, and what might be done with the information collected. While they are figuring that out, informants will typically switch into an on-stage role or special persona, a presentation of self to the outsider...informants will typically craft their responses in such a way as to be amenable to the researcher...(p. 233)". Since I was not an outsider, but a peer, the shared experience did ameliorate this concern. Efforts to re-establish our common bond and mutual trust were be guided by following Miles and Huberman's recommendation that I make my reasons for being there clearly understood and unequivocal, and to conduct off-site interviews in "a congeniàl social environment" (p. 233).

Researcher Bias and Philosophy

Since the researcher is the primary instrument, biases and preconceptions must be acknowledged. For this reason, I maintained a journal to record my thoughts and impressions, and feelings during the data collection and interpretation and I endeavored to take these into account when conducting my analysis (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). I reviewed the impressions gathered regarding the individual interviewed and then

reviewed the transcripts of that individual to determine if my prejudices or prior knowledge of the participant's particular situation might have skewed my interpretation of her experiences. The journal was subjective and revealed particular likes and dislikes – reactions to the various women interviewed as well as comments about the surrounding environment and notes about my successes or failures in interviewing.

Participating in the North Carolina Community College Leadership Program was a pivotal point in my career and needs to be acknowledged as such. Before entering the program, I had little confidence in my ability to lead. I was uncomfortable with what I perceived as the leadership style practiced at my college, a detached, authoritarian style dominated by a network of white males. My limited experience with those in leadership roles in the North Carolina Community College System office confirmed these observations.

Participation in the NCCCLP revealed that there were a variety of leadership styles and that what worked for one, might not work for another. I was encouraged to find the style that suited me best and to use that style. My philosophical beliefs about inclusion, strength in diversity and respect for others was affirmed and I was able to return to my work as a better manager and leader and to take steps to advance my career, including enrolling in the doctoral program in the Adult and Community College department at North Carolina State University.

As stated earlier, I have a strong belief that one should respect others and respect the diversity of their experience. This includes a respect for their words and the meaning they assign to their words. I considered the receiving and interpreting of participant's

experiences a responsibility and a trust and I endeavored not to allow my personal biases distort the words or meanings of the women I interviewed.

## Operational Issues for Dissertation Research

Copies of the interview questions were mailed or faxed to the women I interviewed at least one week prior to the interview. An introductory letter and a release form was sent to all participants confirming their willingness to be interviewed, tape-recorded and included in this study (See Appendix A and B). Confidentiality was assured and pseudonyms were used for people and places referred to in the research.

It was suggested that interviews be held in a quiet area suggested by the participant. Seven participants chose to be interviewed in their office while the others chose a meeting room or, in two instances, a hotel room in a city where they were attending a conference. The interviews lasted approximately one hour although this varied slightly from participant to participant. After each interview, a verbatim transcript was prepared and sent to each participant for verification and comments. While it was initially determined that responses or concerns from the participants regarding the accuracy of the transcription or interpretations, as revealed by member checks, would be included in an appendix at the end of the final paper, the lack of concern by participants made this unnecessary.

# Chapter 4

# CHARACTERISTICS OF PARTICIPANTS AND ANALYSIS OF RESPONSES

## Purpose of Research

The intent of this research was to determine the perceived impact that participation in the North Carolina Community College Leadership Program had on the careers of the participants. A qualitative study using semi-structured interviews provided the primary framework to examine this objective. Additional information came from primary source documents.

## Data Collection

A total of twelve interviews with female participants were conducted between January 2000 and May 2000. These women represented a cross-section of program participants from the ten years the program has been in existence. Three of the women were from community colleges in the mountains, three were from colleges in the coastal plains and six were from colleges in the piedmont area of North Carolina. Rural, urban, and suburban colleges were represented. Participants interviewed were selected based on the college where they were employed, the year they attended the NCCCLP. It was also stipulated that their positional status be middle-to-upper-level administration.

This sampling strategy meets both the definitions for stratified purposeful sampling, with the intent of capturing major variation, and maximum variation sampling which allows for the identification of "central themes or principal outcomes that cut across a great deal of participant or program variation." (Patton, 172).

## Characteristics of Participants Interviewed

Ten of the twelve women were interviewed at their college in their chosen location – most often their office, although several chose to move to a conference room. Two of the women were interviewed in their hotel rooms while attending conferences in High Point and Burlington. The interviews lasted between forty-five minutes and one and one-half hour depending on each woman's response to the questions. Some wished to elaborate and spend time in discussion while others wanted to answer the questions without spending more time than necessary.

The women were Caucasian, African-American, Hispanic and multi-racial. Several were in their thirties but most were in their forties and fifties. All had at least a bachelor's degree, most had master's degrees and four had their doctorates. All women were in middle to upper level management positions – department heads, division chairs, directors, deans or vice presidents.

The names of the participants and the colleges where they are employed will not be listed as this information might lead to identification of the particular person being interviewed, thus jeopardizing confidentiality.

## Research Findings

Through repeated analysis of the data collected, ten distinct themes emerged. In most instances, these themes were echoed by a majority of the participants. In several cases, only one or two participants directly addressed the particular issue, but their insight was so illuminating that these themes have also been included in the following discussion.

No pattern emerged based on the location, size or resources of the participant's college. Nor did the responses of participants change based on year of participation. The differences in responses seemed to fall along lines of experience and position rather than other sampling criteria.

### Career and Promotion

In response to the interview question, "Did participation in the NCCCLP help you in being offered another position or have any significant impact on your career?" the majority of the respondents felt that participation in the leadership program had a positive, though indirect, effect. One participant said, "Whether it (promotion) was directly related to the program, I can't tell you, though I do know that some of the members that were in my classes have moved on up" (BS). Another commented, "I do not think that either the first or second president I served with would look at me in the same light if I had not taken that course and learned the leadership skills" (WJ). A third

said, "…this training was helpful and made it possible for me to become a little more assertive – I played politics a little more" (DC).

Seven of the women interviewed have been promoted since participating in the NCCCLP. " Since then, I have received the department head position and have been promoted to Director…" (SC), " I was made Dean in 1999" (BS). "…My reward was to chair the SACS committee" (MS), " [I was made} Associate Dean." (BT). " I don't know that it had any effect, but since being in that program I have served as Director of our Tech Prep program" (DC). Statistics generated by program planners reveal that "one third of the graduates have been promoted or assumed a variety of new, significant responsibilities within their colleges" (NCCCLP , p. 1).

Words and phrases commonly used by participants to describe the career impact included " enhanced", "supplemented", and "helpful".

None of those interviewed directly attributed promotions or salary increases to participation in the program. One of the participants said, " I wish it were true, if you had been to the program you would be considered one of the final candidates, but this is just one more thing that they look at on your resume" (BP). In fact, this perceived lack of direct reward for participation in the NCCCLP was criticized by three of those interviewed. Some participants felt the responsibility for creating a reward system was the responsibility of the sponsoring college. "There were no monetary gains. I did not even get a bonus that year. I did not get a promotion" (MS). "Recognition was very minimal at the college level" (MS). Others thought the NCCCS should promote or mandate a reward system. "The program would have more teeth to it if you got some

kind of compensation, even a small one, for having attended the course, an incentive of some kind" (CK).

However, with few exceptions, participants agreed that the program had positive, rather than negative or neutral, effects on their career. This was demonstrated by increased job responsibilities, inclusion in college decision-making, and greater involvement in professional activities at both the state and national level. In several cases, the participants also reported that they had undertaken leadership positions in community organizations such as the NAACP, the local PTA, and their churches. Several participants commented somewhat ruefully that all they got out of successful completion of the program was more work for the same pay. "In our system you don't get relief from what you are doing, you just get more work" (DC).

In addition to assuming greater career responsibilities, according to information gathered by program directors, forty-two of the program participants were either in graduate school or have graduated. Examples of community leadership roles include chairing the United Way Campaign in Greensboro, assuming the chairmanship of Leadership Richmond, becoming president of the Graham Rotary Club and founding Leadership Davidson.

Self-confidence

Perhaps one of the most poignant themes, and one emphasized by two participants, was that the mere fact of being selected as "worthy" to attend the program

was an important affirmation. For some, being recognized by their college president and meeting the selection criteria of the NCCCLP, was a life changing or, at least, a career-changing event. "I was proud that my school sent me. It tells me that someone else has faith in me, that I was worthy of going, that I was worthy of leadership and that I was worthy of promotion" (BS). "It showed me that someone did think that I had some leadership potential" (WJ). Another woman said, "If it was not for him (the college president), I would not have been able to do that. It had never happened before, even though I felt like I had potential, he recognized it and said 'why don't we do this?" (HC).

For many of these women, the recognition was necessary to help them to act on what they already knew. "I have always been a leader, a go-getter and an achiever...taking this course helped me come out of my shell" (SC).

Often used phrases, when describing being chosen to participate, were "... I felt validated", "... it gave me self-confidence", "enabled" and "encouraged".

Networking

According to C. Dean Pielstick, in an article on transformational leaders, "Building relationships reflects the interactive, mutual, and shared nature of transforming leader behaviors. A web of high-quality relationships makes it possible to communicate, to effect the shared vision, and to shape the culture that supports the vision" (1998, p. 23). Networking also provides a way for women to support for each other, to share information, and to provide a collective mentor (Aisenberg & Harrington, 1988).

A frequently mentioned benefit of participating in the NCCCLP was the opportunity to expand one's "network". Establishing useful networks is one of the goals of the NCCCLP. During the first three years of the program, each participant was given the assignment of choosing three participants to be their network contacts. Instructions were given to keep these partners informed about any successes or failures in their jobs, and to seek advice and encouragement from these partners. The alumni workshops that are held during the new class's graduation ceremony each year are designed, in part, to strengthen and expand each person's network. Four participants commented that, long after completing the program, the people that they met through the program continued to be a frequently used resource, "The major plus that I have found from this program is the capability it allows for networking with other leaders of other community colleges.... I still refer to a lot of the people I met at that particular program" (BP). " I see people from that class ten years ago and would feel good about calling them for assistance" (MS).

A recent graduate was quite clear about her intentions to make use of her contacts. "I made it a point to shake his (college president) hand and tell him who I was and where I was from, for I thought this might be someone that I could call on later on" (BP). One participant added that it was particularly helpful that the networks cut across all organizational levels – that a student services coordinator at one community college might call the dean of distance education at another college or the department head of the English department at another for needed information.

Male-dominated Hierarchy

> "It seems to me that leadership is conferred in the most ridiculous, unusual, humorous types of ways in this part of the state. It seems that leadership is something that is derived on the golf course, or military buddies...there is not much stress on the academic part...the good old boy system is not changing here at all" (CK).

The existence of gender bias is implied by the perceived need for a program designed for women and minorities. However, during the interviews with the 12 women participants, the perception of the North Carolina Community College system as a male-dominated hierarchical system was directly acknowledged by only two of the participants and referred to indirectly by two others. The African-American women were the most out-spoken about their observations. "Get rid of the old buddy system" (DC).

Dissatisfactions

As mentioned previously, with two or three exceptions, responses toward the experiences provided by the NCCCLP were positive. It is important, for several reasons, to examine some of these exceptions. These have something to say about the importance of designing a training program or professional development activity to meet the needs and ability/interest level of those that it is designed to serve. Secondly, it is instructive to note that the inclusion of those for whom the program was not designed can adversely affect the quality of the experience for the other participants.

Two participants in particular, were supportive of the program in concept, but found that it did not meet their needs. Both these women were already well established in their careers – one was a dean and one a director - and both had considerable experience in administrative positions. In describing the usefulness of the program, they both said, "…been there, done that." One of the women added, "I don't think it's quite on the level for higher end leadership roles." (BP). Another said, " I think having been involved in a Doctorate program just prior to this with so much exposure to leadership information I really didn't learn much new from the leadership program." (HD) Both women were aware that the program could be of value "for those who have not had the opportunity to exercise leadership". However, they felt that it was important, in order to ensure the efficacy of the program to "communicate exactly what the program is going to offer and what type of individual best benefits from participation" (HD). When asked about specific areas that were least useful to them, one of these women, the director of student services, and a third participant who was also an experienced counselor, mentioned what they considered over-emphasis on the Myers-Briggs and "cutesy" and "touchy-feely" ice-breaking and bonding activities. All three of these women said that they were looking for specific skill-building information that would be directly useful in their daily work and that, with the exception of some sessions on budgeting and finance, most of the activities were too general or theoretical to be immediately useful.

Two of these women are now completing the ISA (Institute for Senior Administrators), offered through the North Carolina Community College System Office,

and commented that participation in the ISA meets their professional needs much better than the NCCCLP. Several other women mentioned that, having completed the NCCCLP, they felt they were ready to apply for the ISA. As one noted, "I was already in the position that they were preparing me for. I could have used the Senior Leadership Training course" (TD).

An interesting counterpoint to the reactions of the senior-level women came from one of the participants who is in a mid-level faculty administrator position. She observed, "...Some of the other participants exuded negativity, as if they had been there and done all that. They influenced the group somewhat. They were the ones I want to say to 'you are the ones that need this'" (CK). What are perceived as negative or patronizing attitudes by the majority can be detrimental to the program that emphasizes team-building skills and cooperative efforts.

Leadership Philosophy and Style

Interview questions three and four were designed to encourage reflections on leadership. Question three asked, "Has your thinking about leadership changed as a result of your participation in the NCCCLP. If so, in what ways?" Question four asked "How would you describe yourself as a leader? Did participation in the NCCCLP change your style? "If so, in what ways?"

Responses to question three fell into two categories. Some respondents said that there had been no real change, but that what they had experienced was clarification or a

deeper understanding of the meaning of leadership. Others said they had never really thought much about leadership before participation in the program. Two women, new to administrative positions, found the program helpful because they had never studied leadership before. "When I first came to (my college), I didn't have the background to understand about the different styles of leadership which, after I took the program, cleared up several things" (TD). One said she had found out that it was OK for her to please herself and "be human because when I got into this (leadership role) I made it my business to go out and buy suits like a man" (DC). Another commented "The leadership program made me think about leadership. That's probably the most important thing" (HC). "It did not change my style, it validated what I was already doing. I believe in the team concept" (DC).

Responses to question four did not vary greatly. Women gave different names to their leadership styles. All, however, saw themselves as being democratic and participative. " I guess I am a team player." Another said, " I feel like I am a coach… and I think working as a team is absolutely for me the best way to handle things" (WJ). The senior level women seemed to be more comfortable with the flexibility inherent in situational leadership. They made it clear that there were times when decisive action or decisions with no discussion were necessary and they indicated that they were prepared to take that action and would be responsible for the consequences. Although one of these women describes herself as participative and believes in shared leadership, she knows "If there is a crisis… then we are not going to use the same sort of style. We are going to have to deal with whatever needs to happen in a more independent manner" (HD).

Although the less experienced administrators felt it was important to have discovered a name for their personal leadership style, only one felt that participation had changed her style.

> "Originally what I thought of as a leadership style …was simply one person makes a decision…and everyone conforms to that. Now I feel like I am a coach. When there are decisions to be made, I want to know what my administration wants the outcome to be, and then I go back to all the people who have to work on that and I try to get all the people involved and all the players around a table and see what everybody can bring to this…" (WJ).

Several women mentioned that they had learned new skills that refined their style. One learned that she was an overly critical taskmaster and needed to share her vision of what she wanted to achieve. Another learned that she was 'too much of a perfectionist" and needed to be more realistic in her expectations of her employees, "I guess being perfect is not always right. It is sort of like winning the battle but losing the war" (CK. Two women made a point of mentioning that it was important for them to lead in whatever position they occupied and that they were not interested in climbing a career ladder but in making a contribution in an arena that was important for them personally. One participant said that when the group facilitator made that point, "That rang true to me – it's OK to be the way you are…career advancement is not necessarily title advancement. If you are doing what you enjoy doing, you are constantly growing" (TT).

Another woman said that she had learned to accept only leadership roles that were a good fit (BY).

Two other women said that they had learned to be better listeners and that they felt that was a critical skill for a leader to acquire (YB, BS).

All felt that it was important for the community college system to encourage leadership development at all career levels. One woman said that an important lesson she learned was that "Whatever your job is, it is necessary to make the school run, if you believe you are a leader and if you bring strength to that position, then you are a leader. Leadership comes from inside" (WJ).

Activities and Programs

When asked what aspects of the program were most useful – particular activities or programs, the one that provoked the most reaction was the use of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI). Some background information is in order at this point: utilization of the Myers Briggs typing pervades the programming of NCCCLP. One of the first activities is to take the MBTI and learn about the different "types". Each participant wears a nametag with his or her "type" prominently displayed. The MBTI was often used as the means to center discussions on leadership, diversity issues, team building and in assessing personal strengths and weaknesses.

While all respondents mentioned the MBTI as being a significant activity, reactions were not all positive. In fact, the diametrically opposed reactions were the most

unambiguous, emphatic of the responses to any of the interview questions. The majority of the group found that taking and applying the MBTI was valuable and important. One said, "It helped me understand leaders and their different personalities and how we react to one another" (SC), while another commented that she learned that "You need to have different types on your team" (BS). This comment was expanded on by yet another participant who "...learned how to look at other people and appreciate the differences in them and figure out how I could work with them and in some way exploit (in a positive sense) those differences" (WJ). One of the newer administrators "...learned so much more about myself and how my style affected other folks " (SC).

However, four of the participants, including the two senior level administrators, expressed the same "been there, done that" dissatisfaction with re-taking the MBTI. Several others thought it was given too much emphasis in the range of program activities. (Interesting to note: one of the senior level participants, now completing the ISA, found that an over-emphasis was placed on the MBTI in the ISA as well).

One of those criticizing the emphasis on the MBTI took a more analytical approach, observing, "The problem with any kind of test like that is that it labels you and you begin to kind of typecast people" (HC).

Another minor theme that arose out of the discussion of the Myers-Briggs was the program's treatment of diversity issues. The NCCCLP was designed to provide leadership training to all levels of the community college organization with the major recruiting efforts directed toward women and minorities. The planned programs always

included at least one session on recognizing and combating prejudice or in appreciating diversity. One of the participants found these treatments shallow.

> "One of the weak points that I saw in the leadership piece (program) and that I see with system-wide leadership is cultural diversity issues are not really seriously considered which is a very antiquated position because the world is very multicultural - change is the only constant and [we need to] explore how people are resistant to change and how people are so comfortable where they are that they refuse to understand the changes that are going on" (BY).

Several college presidents presented sessions on budgeting, finance, community college organization, and crisis management. Participants mentioned these experienced-based sessions specifically as being particularly useful. "One of the activities I really did appreciate was when President Phail Wynn came and talked about real life challenges as opposed to theoretical ones" (DH). "He (Phail Wynn) did a good exercise on setting priorities". "I do remember one [session] in particular about budget and that helped me tremendously because the system is different and I have to deal with local budgets and state equipment" (TD). "What I have benefited from is the how to, or the nitty-gritty of management strategy and how the community college system works" (MS).

Participants often had difficulty remembering specific sessions or activities, but clearly recalled excellent speakers. These included Martha Tilyard from the Center for Creative Leadership, Bonnie Stone, Pat Akers, Delores Parker, Phail Wynn, Bryan Brooks, Susan Allred, and Ms. Weisart.

Some participants mentioned that the group experience of tower building was useful. Another said she learned a lot from a discussion of the "glass-ceiling" and career building strategies. One of the participants summed it up saying, " ...you usually add something to your knowledge or skills, or your 'tool bag' that will be of help somewhere down the road" (HC).

Mentoring

The subject of mentoring emerged as a minor theme. Although only two of the twelve interviewed touched on the subject, their comments so clearly paralleled what was Encountered in the review of the literature documented in Chapter Two that it is worth mentioning. Mentoring is an important way for those moving up a career ladder to become acculturated. A good mentor can provide advice and open doors for an aspiring administrator, but quality mentoring is not available to all and can be problematic as previously discussed. This is one area where leadership-training programs can serve a useful purpose. "I have had lots of incidents where a mentor was needed...and that's where the program helped me in place of a mentor (because before) I had no one to consult when I needed some help" (DC). Another woman who was already a dean felt that she did not get the mentoring at the level she needed from participation in the NCCCLP. "It would have been helpful to me if there had been someone there who had been in the same type of situation that I could have talked to and maybe gotten some

guidance from but there wasn't anyone" (TD). Several speakers or program directors were mentioned as role models:

> "She (Susan Allred) is very sharp and is one of those women who sets a very good example. Lots of times when women get into leadership positions they are insecure and come across as bitchy…Susan has a very quiet style. She is very competent. She just works and you realize she is just so good. The kind of example I would really like to follow" (WJ).

Housekeeping

When participants talked about their experience in the NCCCLP, they invariably brought up what might be termed "housekeeping issues." These issues have little to do with program content nor are they related to career advancement, but since they arose spontaneously with all participants, they constitute a minor theme. Some participants found that the locations of the NCCCLP sessions were satisfactory while others expressed dissatisfaction with particular locations. Some participants found overnight sessions unnecessary "I do not see much benefit from staying the evening" while others though they were valuable experiences "The evenings were good for bonding." As evidenced by the above quotes, there was no observable consensus or pattern in opinions regarding these issues.

There was concern expressed for those who had to travel long distances to attend. This particularly affected those on the coast and in the mountains, but all recognized this

as problem, not only for NCCCLP, but also for all state organizations. One participant suggested that, "Maybe it could be divided up into two locations" (DC).

Important Lessons

The last major category, epiphanies or "teachable moments" (Knowles, p. 51) like "housekeeping", reveals no particular patterns, but is much more significant from an adult education perspective. Most participants referred to a moment, either during program activities or upon later reflection, when a critical piece of information triggered a change in their perspective or in their process of knowledge synthesis, which resulted in a new or clearer understanding of the subject under discussion.

Educators are aware of the importance of teachable moments in adult learning, so despite the variations in content, these moments are presented for 1) the insight they may provide for others and 2) to demonstrate, anecdotally, the educational efficacy of the program.

During an exercise in which all were blindfolded, asked to remain silent, and then told to put themselves in alphabetical order, one participant commented, "I learned very quickly that there are always going to be a couple of people in any group who think outside the box and who are going to be the ones leading the rest of them" (WJ). Another realized that

> "...Being a leader is something that happens over period of time, or over a period of years, and that you are never really the same leader that you

were yesterday or the day before, or you will be tomorrow, because you are always becoming a different person" (HC) .

Another participant discovered in a session discussing cross training of staff "…that everyone is important to the whole picture…that was very eye-opening" (BS). Another said she had learned that there was more than one way to reach a goal – "don't give up, just try a different strategy" (DC).

Even those who felt they should have been in the ISA rather than the NCCCLP found something worthwhile in the leadership program. The variety of experiences and activities offered through the NCCCLP ensured that all participants found something useful that they could apply to their own jobs or to their own life.

# Chapter 5

# SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## Summary

This chapter begins with a summary concerning various research procedures and findings associated with this investigation. Conclusions related to this study are subsequently presented. The chapter closes with recommendations for future practice and recommendations for future research.

## Purpose of Research

The NCCCLP is a one-year leadership-training program designed to give women and minorities the skills needed to move into higher level administrative positions. This professional development program is co-sponsored by the AAWCC and the North Carolina Community College System. The major purpose of this study was to investigate the perceptions of participants in the North Carolina Community College Leadership Program (NCCCLP) regarding impact of participation on their career.

## Summary of Methodology

Assessing the impact of this program was accomplished primarily through interviews with twelve female participants selected by purposeful sampling techniques (Patton, 1982). Participants to be interviewed were selected based on year of attendance, geographic region, administrative position and relative affluence of their college. Each participant was interviewed for approximately one hour using semi-structured interview format to ensure that all participants had the opportunity to respond to the same questions.

A literature review was carried out in advance of the investigation. This procedure outlined relevant information on leadership theory, women and leadership theory, women and community college leadership, leadership programs, and models of program evaluation.

This information was used to generate the following interview questions:

1. Tell me about your education and work experience.
2. Please describe any leadership roles you have assumed or been offered since completing the NCCCLP. Did participation in the NCCCLP help you in being offered another position? In what way(s)? Did you accept this position? Why or why not?
3. Has your thinking changed as a result of your participation in the NCCCLP? If so, in what way(s)?

4. How would you describe yourself as a leader? (Leadership style and personal philosophy)? Did participation in NCCCLP change your style? If so, in what way(s)?
5. What aspects of the program were most useful to you? Particular activities or programs? Guest lecturers? Topics of particular interest? How were they useful?
6. What activities/programs were the least useful? Why?

## Conclusions

1. The NCCCLP is perceived by participants as being one of three significant leadership programs offered through or supported by the North Carolina Community College System, the others being the Institute for Senior Administrators and the Executive Leadership Institute. While not clearly advertised or promoted as such, the NCCCLP, according to this research, appears to be most useful to novice administrators. Although those with more years of experience and confidence expressed a need for more advanced training offered through the other institutes, there was a universal recognition of the need for leadership training. This echoes the findings of the AAJCJ (1988) that there is a need to increased diversity among community college leadership, particularly among women and minorities.

2. Participants perceived that participation in the NCCCLP had an indirect, rather than direct, impact on career attainment. Participation did not automatically result in a

raise or promotion, but was seen as a contributing factor. Areas in which they felt the impact was the strongest were: 1) building self-confidence and self-awareness, 2) developing an awareness of leadership theory and practice, 3) learning to work effectively with diverse groups, 4) developing a state-wide network of contacts, and 5) gaining a basic understanding of the structure and operation of the North Carolina Community College System. This perceived indirect rather than direct impact was noted in Chapter 2 wherein Shavlik and Touchton (1983), Speizer (1984) and Anderson (1997) saw a relationship between leadership training and career movement, but Julian (1992), did not.

3. For many women, participation in the NCCCLP acted as a catalyst leading to greater involvement in college affairs, community, state, and national organizations, and in self- improvement. Those interviewed indicated that they possessed more self-confidence and were willing to assume more demanding roles in both career and personal spheres than they had been prior to participation. In many instances, this seemed to stem simply from being acknowledged by supervisors as someone who had the potential to be a leader.

4. The program appears to have achieved a balance between theory and practice that satisfied the participants. One half of those interviewed expressed appreciation for the sessions on leadership theory, personality and behavioral traits and diversity issues while the other half clearly preferred sessions on preparing and managing a college budget, NCCCS organization and structure, crisis management and other role playing exercises.

5. Participants in the program embodied varying levels of self-confidence and leadership skill. Several of the participants exhibited a lack of self-confidence that reflects Gilligan's (1982) critique of classic development theory. She writes that women, as a result of being compared and comparing themselves to standards that they do not fit, have accepted, and in many cases, internalized their perceived incomplete and inadequate development as being inferior to that of males. For many of the participants, being encouraged to develop their own leadership styles enabled them to more readily develop the necessary leadership skills, as predicted by Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger and Tarule (1986).

6. Research by Gillett-Karam, Baker-Smith & Simpson (1997) and others indicates that discrimination against women still exists. Interviews with women participants in the NCCCLP support these findings. While these women appreciated the opportunities to develop their leadership skills, there was a perception by four participants that there was still a good-old-boy's network in the North Carolina Community College System that had an impact on who was selected for higher-level administrative positions.

7. Leadership styles within the NC Community College System, if NCCCLP participants can be used as an indicator, are changing. Although different participants described leadership styles by different names, without exception women identified themselves with participatory or transformational leadership models. This reflects the findings of Helgesen (1990), Bensimon and Neuman (1993) and Gillett-Karam (1988) that indicates women are more likely to adopt these models. No one saw herself as an authoritarian leader, although, for many, that was the style with which they were most

familiar since that was common leadership model during the development of community colleges (Brint and Karabel, 1989). Participants expressed pleasant surprise that their leadership styles were acceptable even though their style was different than what they had seen modeled in the workplace. Kezar (1998) found that, with a more diverse population, the authoritarian model is ineffective. This finding was supported by the attitudes of the participants. They all believed that leaders need to have, as Capozzoli (1989) suggested, interpersonal skills, patience, listening skills, and a cooperative spirit.

8. The NCCCLP is not, in its present form, able to provide a satisfactory professional development opportunity for all women. Participants with years of experience in middle-to-upper level administrative positions indicated that they were familiar with the material and concepts presented and would have benefited from less general, more focused training.

## Recommendations for Practice

1. The NCCCLP occupies a precarious position in that it is only partially funded by the NCCCS. Each year, the program directors must request funding from the North Carolina Community College System and the amount received varies. A recognition of this as the first in a series of leadership training opportunities, coming before the ISA and the ELI as well as a commitment to continued funding would enable program planners to spend less time on lobbying for funding and more time refining the program. It is difficult to "grow" a program when there is no guarantee of support by state or local

agencies. The recognition that NCCCLP is the first of a series of three leadership training opportunities and the continued funding and system oversight that would make it as secure as the other training programs, would make it easier to articulate the purpose of the program and who would most benefit. It was clear, from the positive evaluations of novice administrators, that the NCCCLP provides the support and skills to enable the participants to move into more demanding leadership positions.

2. It became evident, listening to the participants, that the NCCCLP needs to more clearly define itself. Those who expressed dissatisfaction with the program felt they had been misinformed about whom the program was for and what they could expect in the way of content. Those who were already in upper-level management positions, in particular, indicated that they would not have applied for admittance to the program if they had realized it would cover material with which they were already familiar. If the program was more clearly defined and the audience for which it is intended could be more specifically identified, these expressed dissatisfactions would be resolved. Marketing to a more homogeneous group would allow program planners to design the program to meet the needs and expectations of the participants.

3. Respondents also commented that there were no incentives offered by most of the colleges to complete the leadership program. No pay increase or promotion was tied to the program by any of the colleges. With one exception, the participants who remarked on this were novice administrators. While an external reward system was not an issue for the senior administrators, building in a reward system of some sort

may encourage participation of those for whom the training is intended.

4. Adequate criteria were either not provided or not followed in selection of participants. The selection of who was chosen to attend the program was seen by some to be an arbitrary decision of the college president. One participant noted "Presidents, who select these people to go to the conference (NCCCLP) often pick leaders to send instead of potential leaders" (HD). Again, clear selection criteria followed by college presidents and rigorously enforced by the selection committee is necessary in order to insure a group with similar needs and expectations.

5. An unanticipated finding of this research is that the program has weaknesses that are consonant with inadequate program planning, particularly in the areas of identification of the target audience and in involving the various stakeholder groups.

According to Sork and Carfarella (Handbook, p. 235), "there should be an unambiguous determination of who is and who is not eligible for the attention of the program planner" (p. 235). If Boone's (1985) conceptual programming model were applied to the NCCCLP, it is evident that Task 3 in the Study and analysis of publics which states, "Based on a thorough diagnosis of the organization's publics and their perceived relevance to the mission of the adult education organizations, the adult educator must identify and order those target publics to be served" (p.102), was not fully completed. The fact that the program says it is designed primarily for women and minorities indicates that some identification of the target audience was done, but the fact that there were such varied levels of positional status and experience among participants

and dissatisfaction expressed by participants regarding these differences indicates that the planning was incomplete.

By not giving enough attention to identifying and involving stakeholder groups in developing and implementing the NCCCLP, particularly the community college presidents, it appears that the program planners may have weakened the program. According to those interviewed, presidents of the community colleges often recommend inappropriate applicants to the program. This and the fact that most colleges provide no direct incentive for program completion, reveals that the presidents are not sufficiently aware of the program and its purpose.

The lack of direct affiliation with the North Carolina Community College System's other leadership training programs, the ISA and EMI, reveals another stakeholder group that could provide valuable input and support. A clear link between the programs and clear differentiation of which programs were for which publics would strengthen all the programs.

## Recommendations for Further Research

Many questions arose during this research that could not be answered within the scope of this study. Other areas that might yield useful information might include research in the following areas.

1. Self-esteem or self-confidence was mentioned by many participants as something valuable they "learned" through participation in the NCCCLP. It would be interesting to know what role perceived self-confidence plays in leadership attainment and how it is "taught". Why was this a non-issue in participants who had achieved what they perceived as career success or competency? What makes the difference?
2. Are there similar programs that reflect a more thorough grounding in program planning concepts? What effect would following a program planning model have if applied to the NCCCLP?
3. What are the differences between the three North Carolina Community College Leadership programs? How are they the same? How does each program affect the respective careers of participants?
4. If controlled for race, age, and positional status, how would the results of this study vary?
5. Would the results differ if men participants had been included?
6. What are the advantages and disadvantages of programs planned by an autonomous group of adult educators and of programs planned under the direction of a state agency?
7. Is leadership style and philosophy changing in North Carolina community colleges? If so, what is causing the transformation?

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# APPENDICES

## Appendix A: Interview Questions

### Interview Questions

1. Tell me about your education and work experience.
2. Please describe any leadership roles you have assumed or been offered since completing the NCCCLP? Did participation in the NCCCLP help you in being offered another position? In what way(s)? Did you accept this position? Why or why not?
3. Has your thinking changed as a result of your participation in the NCCCLP? If so, in what way(s)?
4. How would you describe yourself as a leader? (Leadership style and personal philosophy)? Did participation in NCCCLP change your style? If so, in what way(s)?
5. What aspects of the program were most useful to you? Particular activities or programs? Guest lecturers? Topics of particular interest? How were they useful?
6. What activities/programs were the least useful? Why?
7. What would you change about the program? Add? Delete?

## Appendix B: Sample Introductory Letter to Participants

Date

Participant's Name and Address

Dear _____,

I am working on my dissertation at NCSU and am researching the effect participation in the North Carolina Community College Leadership Program has had on the careers of women participants, what aspects of the program were most influential, and how the program has changed your thinking about leadership.

I would like to interview you for no more than 1 hour in a convenient, quiet place of your choosing. A copy of the interview questions is encloses for your information and reflection.

As you will see from the enclosed consent form, these interviews will be confidential and only I will know your identity. I am requesting permission to tape record the interview to ensure that I have a transcript for data analysis, but when results are reported, pseudonyms for persons and locations will be used. Direct quotes from participants will be utilized to demonstrate the validity of claims made, but quotes that could identify the speaker will not be included. A copy of the transcript will be sent to you for your review and comments.

I have chosen interviews as my primary data collection technique because I want you to have the opportunity to express your thoughts about your unique experience in the NCCCLP. I will be contacting you by phone within the next two weeks to schedule an interview with you. Your participation would be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely yours,

Laura S. Gorham

Appendix C: Sample Consent Form

I _____agree to be interviewed for an evaluative study of the North Carolina Community College Leadership program. I understand that data gathered from the interview will be used for research for Laura S. Gorham's doctoral dissertation regarding the program's impact on the careers of participants. I will be interviewed for no more than 60 minutes at a location that is convenient for me and conducive to quiet reflection and conversation.. The interview will be tape recorded, and notes will be taken.

This interview will be confidential and the tapes, transcripts and notes will be kept in a secure area. I understand that the Human Subjects Review Board at NCSU has approved the questions asked and that permission has been given to proceed with the research.

There is no anticipated physical or mental risk to me and I can withdraw my consent and discontinue participation in this study at any time.

I have been given a description of the study through an initial introductory letter. I understand that if I have any questions I should contact Laura Gorham (336) 506-4186

Date_____ Signature of Participant _____

Date_____ Signature of Researcher_____

Date_____ Signature of NCSU Advisor_____

## Appendix D: Titles of Program Activities

Governance and Budget Session

Dealing with Difficult People

Teamwork

The Leadership Challenge

Advancement Strategies

FIRO-B: Fundamental Interpersonal Relations Orientation Behavior

Personality and Leadership

Accountability and Institutional Effectiveness

History, Trend, and Issues in the Community College System

Visioning

Conflict Resolution

Managing People – Situational Leadership

Designing the Ideal Community College

Goal Setting

Consensus Building

Understanding Diversity